

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 04413 01 OF 02 220027Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00

EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00

SY-05 IO-13 AID-05 PC-01 ICAE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 /103 W

-----074225 220038Z /63

O R 212153Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 117

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY LAPAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 4413

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: MORALES BERMUDEZ, MAY 20 SPEECH

REF: LIMA 4412

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT. IN A 70 MINUTE "CONVERSATION" WITH PERUVIAN PEOPLE ON THE EVENING OF MAY 20, PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ DESCRIBED THE CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION ON THE EVE OF THE MAY 22-23 GENERAL STRIKE. HIS POLITICAL MESSAGE WAS SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE, WITH PARTICULAR APPEAL TO THE MILITARY INSTITUTION AS THEY GIRD UP FOR ANTI-STRIKE DUTIES. MORALES BERMUDEZ STRONGLY CRITICIZED PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS THAT ARE TRYING TO DISRUPT PUBLIC ORDER, THE DEMAGOGUERY OF POLITICAL PARTIES THAT HAVE NOT OFFERED ANY CONSTRUCTIVE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, AND THE INDEPENDENT PRESS WHICH HAS BEEN CREATING CONFUSION WITH ITS EXTREME SENSATIONALISM. HE APPEALED FOR MORE RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR WHILE REITERATING THE FIRM INTENTION

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PAGE 02 LIMA 04413 01 OF 02 220027Z

OF THE GOP TO MAINTAIN THE SCHEDULED RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC GOV'T. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE EMERGENCY MEASURES WERE ONLY TO PERMIT THE GOV'T TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER IN THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION, AND THAT THEY COULD HOPEFULLY BE LIFTED IN A VERY FEW DAYS. AS A CONCESSION TO POLITICAL PARTIES PRESSING FOR AN ACCELERATED SCHEDULE FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE, MORALES BERMUDEZ STATED THAT

THE GOV'T WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM IN ADVANCING THE TIMETABLE, IF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY COMPLETED ITS WORK ON A NEW CONSTITUTION AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

2. IN EXPLAINING HIS ECONOMIC STRATEGY, THE PRESIDENT STATED THE AUSTERITY MEASURES WERE NECESSARY TO OFFSET THE FINANCIAL IMBALANCE ACCUMULATED OVER SEVERAL YEARS FROM BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS. WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT HIS ECONOMIC POLICY CONTINUED TO BE NEITHER EXTREME LEFT OR EXTREME RIGHT, HE DID MAKE CLEAR THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDED TO BE STRENGTHENED TO OFFSET THE IMBALANCE CREATED IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION. HE STRONGLY DENIED THAT THE MEASURES WERE IMPOSED FROM ABROAD, REJECTING RECENT RUMORS AS DESIGNED TO INJURE THE MILITARY GOV'T AT A CRITICAL PERIOD. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THE URGENT NEED FOR RESTRUCTURING THE FOREIGN DEBT SO THAT THE DEBT SERVICE RATION IS NO MORE THAN 20-25 PERCENT OF EXPORTS. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT IT WOULD BE UTOPIAN AND DEMAGOGIC TO CLAIM THAT PRESENT MILGOV COULD SOLVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BEFORE 1980, BUT THAT THE PLAN WAS TO HAVE PERUVIA ON THE PATH TO SUCH RECOVERY BY THAT TIME. PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF MORALES BERMUDEZ PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY ARE: 1) FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR DIRECT INVESTMENT; 2) MAXIMUM AUSTERITY FOR ALL, WITHOUT EXCEPTION; 3) RE-STUDY OF INCOME TAX STRUCTURE, ESPECIALLY INDIVIDUAL EXEMPTIONS; CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LIMA 04413 01 OF 02 220027Z

4) ELIMINATION OF WASTE IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING; 5) "DE-BUREAUCRATIZATION" OF PUBLIC SECTOR; 6) PRICE POLICIES FOR ARTICLES OF BASIC NECESSITY WHICH ARE FAIR AND WHICH WILL ELIMINATE SPECULATION; 7) RESTRUCTURING FOREIGN PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT; 8) EXPORT PROMOTION; AND 9) REDUCTION OF CONTRABAND. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS SEEKING WAYS OF BRINGING REPRESENTATIVES OF LABOR AND MANAGEMENT INTO MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING.

3. OUR IMPRESSION AS WELL AS FIRST REACTIONS FROM PERUVIANS IS THAT THE SPEECH WAS DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT STRENGTHENING COHESION AND MORALE IN THE MILITARY AS THEY PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE GENERAL STRIKE. MANY MIDDLE RANKING OFFICERS HAVE BEEN GRUMBLING ABOUT ALL THE UNFAIR CRITICISM THE MILITARY HAS BEEN GETTING FROM POLITICIANS AND THE PRESS, AND THE PRESIDENT TOLD THEM WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN WAITING TO HEAR. DESPITE CONSIDERABLE RHETORIC, THE SPEECH ALSO CARRIES SOME HEARTENING WORDS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. HOWEVER, THERE WAS LITTLE ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE THE UNIONS OR THE LEFT FROM THE STRIKE, AND IN FACT NO DIRECT REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE GENERAL

STRIKE ON MONDAY. THIS REFLECTS THE FACT THAT NOW ALL ORGANIZED LABOR WILL EITHER BE ON STRIKE OR "IN MOURNING", AND THUS THERE IS LITTLE HOPE TO DO MORE THAN MINIMIZE VIOLENCE AND PROPERTY DAMAGA. (IN CONTRAST, THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON THE EVE OF THE FEBRUARY GENERAL STRIKE WAS PRIMARILY A PATRIOTIC, AND LARGELY SUCCESSFUL APPEAL FOR WORKERS TO STAY ON THE JOB.) AS FOR THE MAN IN THE STREET, HE IS STILL IN A STATE OF ECONOMIC SHOCK FOLLOWING IMPOSITION OF THE AUSTERITY MEASURES, AND PROBABLY HAD DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THE SPEECH IN MANY PLACES. END SUMMARY AND COMMENTS.

4. FOLLOWING ARE DETAILS AND EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.  
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PAGE 04 LIMA 04413 01 OF 02 220027Z

5. POLITICAL THEMES.

A. EXTREMISTS PROVOKED NATIONAL EMERGENCY. THE PRESIDENT SEVERELY AND REPEATEDLY DENOUNCED EXTREMISTS AND "PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS" THROUGHOUT HIS SPEECH. HE BLAMED THEM FOR STIRRING UP THE PEOPLE AND PROVOKING THE LAMENTABLE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK. MORALES BERMUDEZ ADMITTED THAT THE AUSTERITY MEASURES WERE HARSH AND THAT THE GOP PERHAPS HAD FAILED TO PREPARE THE PUBLIC FOR THEIR SEVERITY BUT HE ACCUSED "DEMAGOGUES," "EXTREMISTS" AND A "SENSATIONALIST" PRESS OF BEING THE PRINCIPAL THREAT TO THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO CIVILIANS AND TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY. BECAUSE OF THESE ACTIONS THREATENING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY, AND AS TEMPORARY MEASURE ONLY, THE GOP HAD BEEN FORCED TO SUSPEND LIBERTIES AND INTERRUPT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

B. POLITICANS AND PRESS CRITICIZED. MORALES BERMUDEZ USED STRONG LANGUAGE AGAINST NOT ONLY EXTREMISTS BUT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND COMMENTATORS WHO HE SAID FAILED TO MAKE CONSTRUUTIVE PROPOSALS OR PROVIDE USEFUL CRITICAL COMMENT. THE PRESIDENT CLAIMED THAT PERU WAS THREATENED BY TWO ADVERSARIES: "CAPITALISTIC TOTALITARIANISM" AND THE "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT." BUT BETWEEN THESE TWO EXTREME PHILOSOPHIES WHICH ARE HARMING PERU TODAY, HE NOTED, WE FIND THE VAST MAJORITY OF PERUVIAN CITIZENS WHO WANT ONLY PEACE, WORK AND PROSPERITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THIS MODERATE MAJORITY MERITS RESPECT AND DESERVES A SERIOUS AND JUST SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT. SOMEWHAT BITTERLY, MORALES BERMUDEZ OBSERVED THAT HE HAD NOT YET HEARD ONE REALISTIC PROPOSAL FROM ANY POLITICAL PARTY. THE FREE PRESS HE OBSERVED WAS CREATING CONFUSION IN THE COUNTRY BY ITS EXTREME  
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PAGE 05 LIMA 04413 01 OF 02 220027Z

SENSATIONALISM THAT IN NO WAY CONTRIBUTED TO THE  
SOLUTION OF THE NATION'S SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

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PAGE 01 LIMA 04413 02 OF 02 220039Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LIMA 4413

C. DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE TOWARDS DEMOCRACY. ON THE  
POSITIVE SIDE, MORALES BERMUDEZ EMPHASIZED THE "HISTORIC  
PROMISE" OF THE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE TO TRANSFER POWER  
TO A LEGITIMATELY ELECTED CIVIL GOVERNMENT. HE REPEATED  
HIS RECENT REMARKS TO NEWSMEN THAT ONLY A STRONG GOVERNMENT ALLOWED  
FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS AND STATED THAT THIS CONTINUED TO BE  
HIS VIEW. THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON LIBERTIES THEREFORE WERE ONLY  
TEMPORARY. HE THEN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS EMERGENCY  
SITUATION WOULD BE ENDED IN A "VERY FEW DAYS".

D. POSSIBILITY OF EARLIER GENERAL ELECTIONS. MORALES BERMUDEZ  
CAREFULLY UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT THE TWO WEEK POSTPONEMENT  
OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WAS A RECOMMENDATION  
INDEPENDENTLY ARRIVED AT BY THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION.  
THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTANCE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION WOULD NOT  
RPT NOT ALTER THE OVERALL POLITICAL TIMETABLE. HE WENT  
ON TO BERVICE THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE CONSTITUENT

ASSEMBLY MIGHT COMPLETE ITS TASK EARLIER THAN THE TIME  
ALLOTTED IT. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, HE SAID, THIS  
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PAGE 02 LIMA 04413 02 OF 02 220039Z

GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM IN MOVING UP  
THE POLITICAL TIMETABLE TAKING ACCOUNT OF THIS REALITY,  
IN OTHER WORDS, IN PROMULGATING THE NEW CONSTITUTION.  
(ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT DID NOT DIRECTLY, SA SO, AN EARLIER  
PROMULGATION OF THE CONSTITUTION LOGICALLY WOULD PRODUCE  
EARLIER GENERAL ELECTIONS.)

E. CALL FOR REFLECTION. HAVING OFFERED THE POLITICAL  
PARTIES THE PROSPECT OF RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT  
BEFORE 1980, THE PRESIDENT WARNED THAT NOT ONLY WERE  
TRANQUILITY AND PEACE INDISPENSABLE TO A TRANSFER OF  
POLITICAL POWER BUT ALSO "STABILITY". THE POLITICAL  
PARTIES AND LABOR GROUPS, HE SAID, SHOULD REFLECT ON  
THIS FACT, ESPECIALLY DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS. MORALES  
BERMUDEZ SAID HE WAS SADDENED BY EXTREMIST REMARKS AND  
CHARACTERIZED CRITICISMS FROM THE LEFT AND RIGHT AS  
NEGATIVE AND DANGEROUS. HE WARNED THAT SUCH ATTACKS  
COULD RESULT IN THE NEEDLESS DESTRUCTION OF PEOPLE,  
INSTITUTIONS, AND PRINCIPLES IN THE COUNTRY.

F. COHESIVENESS OF ARMED FORCES. RESPONDING TO THE  
RECENT WAVE OF RUMORS ABOUT CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP, THE  
PRESIDENT NOTED THAT THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNTRY  
HAD BEEN WORKING TOGETHER HARMONIOUSLY AND WITHOUT  
DISSENT DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS. UNDOUBTEDLY RUMORS  
HAVE BEEN CIRCULATED WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF "WOUNDING"  
AND DIVIDING OUR ARMED FORCES AND POLICE. HOWEVER, HE  
CONCLUDED, "I SHOULD REPEAT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE  
SOCIAL PEACE OF PERU AND THE SANE AND HEALTHY MAJORITY  
OF THE COUNTRY THAT THERE IS PERMANENT COHESION AMONG OUR  
ARMED FORCES AND POLICE IN CARRYING OUT THE POLITICAL  
AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES WE HAVE OUTLINED."

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PAGE 03 LIMA 04413 02 OF 02 220039Z

#### 6. ECONOMIC MEASURES AND PLANS:

A. ECONOMIC MEASURES ARE NON-IDEOLOGICAL. MORALES  
BERMUDEZ STRESSED THAT THE NEW ECONOMIC AUSTERITY  
MEASURES WERE NEITHER LEFTIST NOR RIGHTIST, BUT RATHER  
PRAGMATIC, REALISTIC MEASURES DESIGNED TO SOLVE PERU'S  
ECONOMIC CRISIS. HE EXPLAINED RATHER DEFENSIVELY THAT

IN FIRST YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION PRIVATE CAPITAL FLED AND INVESTMENT DECLINED. THE GOV'T FELT OBLIGED TO TAKE UP THIS SLACK, AND THE RESULT HAS BEEN AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY WHICH MUST BE PUT INTO BETTER BALANCE. "WE WANT TO INCREASE INVESTMENT, PRODUCTION, AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE PRIVATE SECTOR," THE PRESIDENT NOTED.

B. HELPING THE POOREST. MORALES BERMUDEZ SAID THAT THE GOP WAS DETERMINED TO MITIGATE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES ON THOSE WHO COULD LEAST AFFORD IT -- THE MOST ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED PERUVIANS. BUT WHILE THE GOP IS DETERMINED TO HELP THE HUMBLE WORKER, IT SHOULD ALSO BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE PUBLIC OUTCRIES ATTACKING THE NEW MEASURES COME NOT FROM THE WORKERS THEMSELVES BUT FROM AGITATORS AND DEMAGOGUES ON THE EXTREME LEFT AND EXTREME RIGHT WHO WERE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE CRISIS TO PURSUE THEIR OWN POLITICAL ENDS.

C. DENIES FOREIGN PRESSURE. THE PRESIDENT VEHEMENTLY DENIED THAT THE IMF OR ANY OTHER FOREIGN SOURCE HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR PERU'S ADOPTING NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES. "I MUST SAY TO ALL PERUVIANS, IN ALL TRUTH AS A SOLDIER AND A PATRIOT, THAT THE RECENT ECONOMIC MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF ABSOLUTE DIGNITY AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY".

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PAGE 04 LIMA 04413 02 OF 02 220039Z

D. NEGOTIATING WITH DIGNITY. MORALES BERMUDEZ STATED THAT AS OF THIS MOMENT PERU DOES NOT HAVE AN AGREEMENT WITH ANY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISM, AND PROMISED THAT NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD SUCH AGREEMENTS AIMED AT HELPING PERU SOLVE ITS FINANCIAL CRISIS, THOUGH DIFFICULT, WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF DIGNITY.

E. RESTRUCTURING FOREIGN DEBT. THE PRESIDENT NOTED THAT THE PRESENT CRISIS WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO MANY YEARS OF LARGE PUBLIC SECTOR BUDGET DEFICITS WHICH HAD BEEN FINANCED BY FOREIGN BORROWING. HE STRESSED THAT THE AUSTERITY MEASURES WHICH HAD TO BE UNDERTAKEN TO SOLVE THE CRISIS SHOULD NOT BE SUCH AS TO SACRIFICE THE FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERU. IN THIS REGARD, HE GAVE CONSIDERABLE STRESS TO THE URGENT NEED TO RESTRUCTURE FOREIGN PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT -- HE MENTIONED THE NEED TO REDUCE THE DEBT SERVICE RATIO TO 20-25 PERCENT -- IN ORDER THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS COULD PROCEED. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT DEBT RESTRUCTURE WAS ACCOMPLISHED QUICKLY WITH

USSR, AND STRESSED NEED FOR RESTRUCTURING NOW WITH  
WESTERN COUNTRIES.

F. PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY. THE PRESIDENT'S  
PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AS MENTIONED IN SPEECH,  
INCLUDES:

- FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ENCOURAGING AN  
EXPANSION OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT AND PRODUCTION;
- AUSTERITY FOR ALL AND WITHOUT EXCEPTION (A CLEAR REFERENCE  
TO THE NEED FOR AUSTERITY WITHIN THE MILITARY AS WELL AS  
CIVILIANS);
- CHANGES IN THE TAX STRUCTURE SO AS TO ELIMINATE MANY  
EXEMPTIONS AND TO ACHIEVE A BROADER TAX BASE;
- ELIMINATION OF WASTE IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING, WITHOUT  
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PAGE 05 LIMA 04413 02 OF 02 220039Z

EXCEPTION (AGAIN A POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO THE MILITARY);

- AN EFFECTIVE -DE-BUREAUCRATIZATION" OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR  
WITHOUT INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT, BY MEANS OF TRANSFERRING  
PERSONNEL FROM USELESS WORK (TRABAJO MUERTO) TO USEFUL  
OCCUPATION (TRABAJO VIVO) IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR;
- PRICE POLICIES FOR ARTICLES OF BASIC NECESSITY SUCH AS  
FOOD AND MEDICINES WHICH ARE FAIR, AND ELIMINATE SPECULATIVE  
PROFITS;
- PROMOTION OF EXPORTS;
- REDUCTION OF CONTRABAND AND EVASION OF IMPORT TAXES.

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## Message Attributes

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